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*The Fundamentals of Accounting.* By WILLIAM MORSE COLE, A.M., Professor of Accounting, Harvard University, with the collaboration of ANNE ELIZABETH GEDDES, A.B. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. Pp. xi+454.

It has often been said that a book is justified if it presents new material which is valuable or if it presents old material in a new and useful way. *Fundamentals of Accounting* meets both of these requirements and especially the latter one. It is not a rehash of old material. It is the exposition of a "new thinking through" of the problems of double entry bookkeeping and the elements of accounting science. It is true that the author's theory of double entry is based on the "equation method" which is as old as bookkeeping itself and which has been presented ably by J. F. Schaer in Germany and H. R. Hatfield in America. Nevertheless, the author has developed and elaborated this theory to an extent that he is entitled to credit for a real contribution.

It is interesting to compare the present book with the author's earlier text, *Accounts, Their Construction and Interpretation* which was written thirteen years before. In the earlier text, Professor Cole devotes the first part of his book to a treatment of the principles of bookkeeping (which is concerned largely with bookkeeping procedure) and this is followed by a discussion of the principles of accounting. In the present volume "the technique of bookkeeping does not appear until the ninth chapter, and then it results from a need of labor-saving devices. This technique is dwelt upon only enough to show the feasibility of most of the information that the accountant desires." This procedure is in conformity with the present tendency, in collegiate courses in accounting, of mastering principles before plunging into technique and of minimizing detail as much as possible. The author very aptly says, "Though bookkeeping is the tool of accounting, it is a tool so simple in principle that to ask anyone who does not intend to be a bookkeeper or professional accountant to spend many months in studying it is almost an educational crime." Further evidence of good educational method is given in the statement, "The whole method of procedure is based on the fact that nothing is of interest until some need of it or curiosity about it, is felt." Accounting instructors have often failed woefully in realizing the significance of this pedagogical principle. Consequently they have plunged students into a mass of detail without any explanation of the why or wherefore, with the result that the students mastered it merely by rote if they mastered it at all.

The text covers comprehensively the fundamentals of accounting, if accounting be interpreted in the strict and orthodox sense, and the topics selected for discussion are well chosen. From the point of view of the reviewer it is to be regretted that the author restricts himself primarily to a consideration of the recording phase of accounting and gives slight attention to the interpretative phase. The use of accounting in administrative control is not considered and the relation of accounting to other fields such as statistics and economics is at most only suggested. The author may well say that a consideration of these matters is not the function of a text on fundamentals. Nevertheless, their treatment even in a brief way would be beneficial in developing a proper point of view for the beginner and the author is well qualified to give a profitable discussion of them.

Despite the undoubted merit of this text as a philosophical discussion of accounting fundamentals, it is more than doubtful whether it will serve adequately the purpose for which it is written, namely, a textbook for beginners. Not many instructors will care to require their students to spend the time and energy which would be necessary to comprehend this text. The author states that he "does not avoid a matter because it chances to be abstract or difficult" and to a certain extent this plan is commendable. It is doubtful, however, whether it is desirable to make a subject unnecessarily hard to understand and it seems to the reviewer that in many cases this text is subject to this criticism. For instance, it would hardly seem necessary to make a student puzzle over the following in order to learn one part of the meaning of a credit: "A decrease in an asset is the opposite of an increase in an asset; and as the increase gives a debit entry, the decrease must give a credit entry; this change is *doubly* the opposite of an increase of an ownership—claim—for it is a *reverse* change, a decrease in a reverse account, an asset, and so the entry is itself a credit." The text abounds with statements of a similar nature. It is not contended that the text cannot be taught to beginners. Almost anything can be taught to college students if one desires to spend the necessary time and effort. It is contended that the subject-matter of the text is made unnecessarily difficult and that the reward which the beginner would obtain from its mastery would not be commensurate with the cost.

The chapters on profits, depreciation, maintenance, and cost are especially useful and will compensate a careful reading. In the discussion of such topics the author is at his best and seems much more

at home than in the presentation of the elements. In fact the later chapters of the book are written in much more simple style than are the beginning chapters.

Without doubt this text should find a place in the library of every teacher and practitioner of accounting. The profession is indebted to the author for his stimulating and inspiring treatise. The literature of accounting would be benefited by the production of more books which emphasize fundamentals rather than technique and detail.

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*The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875.* BLANCHE EVANS HAZARD. Harvard University Press. 1921.

Since shoemakers as a class have been unique among artisans for their high standard of life and thought, this study has a human interest not common in monographs. The book is the outcome of ten years of research, and is a model of scientific workmanship. It is also unusually readable because enough details of local history are woven in to give a setting for the main theme; moreover, the footnotes are full of interesting personal facts and comments. The device of opening each chapter with a summary of the contents acts like a searchlight, as someone has said, lighting up the reader's path ahead. There is a very careful index. The sources of the information gathered are classified at the end, and consist mainly of the oral testimony of individual shoemakers (many of them octogenarians), old account books, private business papers, statistics, letters, newspaper files, and official records. Extracts from the most valuable and least accessible of these are included, among other documents, as appendices; they occupy half the volume, and are a mine of valuable material for students seeking data on social and economic conditions.

The history of this ancient industry seems to the author to verify inductively the stages of industrial evolution set forth by Karl Bücher (p. vii). It is these stages that are traced with abundant illustration at every point. During the early colonial days shoes were produced for home consumption only, either by the head of the household or by itinerant cobblers. By 1750 this home stage had merged into the handicraft stage in which the shoemaker dealt directly with his market. The coming of the Revolution, independence, and the